



Archdiocese of Vancouver
ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE

October 3, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

“Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Mark 10:14).

Children are our most precious gifts. As a faith community, we have a sacred responsibility to protect them from harm and to help them flourish in every aspect of their lives. Dear parents: as their primary educators, you have tremendous influence over how your children understand their intrinsic goodness and dignity. It is in your homes that your children are nurtured “into thriving adults who love the Lord with all their hearts, souls and minds—including how they steward their sexuality” (*Equipped*, p.11).

Today one of the greatest threats to our children is pornography. The worldwide pornography industry generates an estimated US\$97 billion dollars in annual revenue.¹

Our children are targeted victims of this insidious business. The average age when a child is first exposed to pornography is eleven. Children are particularly susceptible to pornography addiction because their young brains are still developing. Early exposure to pornography can lead to a lifetime of distorted views of sexual intimacy. It also negatively impacts how children view themselves and others, and impairs their ability to have healthy relationships with their peers, parents, future spouses and, most tragically, with God.

To address the evil of pornography, we as a faith community are observing a *Safe Haven Sunday*. On this designated weekend we have the opportunity to tackle the harm caused by pornography.

As a way of supporting families in establishing homes as “safe havens” for our children, our parishes and schools are providing families with this booklet, *Equipped: Smart Catholic Parenting in a Sexualized Culture*.

Equipped is a guide for how parents can teach their children about the goodness of their sexuality and their core identity as children of God. This booklet helps families to have informed, healthy and engaged conversations sexuality in a culture where pornography is widespread. *Equipped* also provides families with practical tools and resources on how to shield children from this evil and the life-draining trap of sexual shame (*Equipped*, p. 12).

Know that I keep you and all of our children in my prayers. Together let us embrace our calling to cherish our precious young ones, protecting them from all harm, and forming them in understanding their God-given dignity.

With the assurance of my prayers for you and your families, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *J. Michael Miller CSB*

✠ J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver

¹ Platt, Spencer. "Things Are Looking Up in America's Porn Industry," NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/things-are-looking-americas-porn-industry-n289431>